

quality of life for their people. Also this year the United States Congress has had before it the African Growth and Opportunity Act. This legislation and our initiative constitute a collective American effort to help fulfill the promise of a stable, prosperous, and democratic Africa. I urge the Congress to pass quickly the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Our goal remains the achievement of sustained economic development for Africa and we continue to be guided by the conviction that economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa will benefit both Africans and Americans. African countries continue to make progress toward political and economic reform, but this progress is fragile and must be supported.

The Administration's Partnership for Growth and Opportunity in Africa has five key elements. First, we intend to provide increased access to our markets for African exports. The most committed African reformers will receive the greatest access. In the future, the United States will be prepared to negotiate free trade agreements with these countries. Congressional action is particularly important if we are to implement successfully these elements of the Partnership. This report discusses the steps we are currently taking to ensure improved access for African and American products in our respective markets and to bring about increased mutually beneficial trade.

Second, we will increase technical assistance to enable African countries to take the fullest advantage of these new programs. This report discusses the ways that we are assisting African countries to undertake reforms that will enable them to grow through increased trade and investment.

Third, we are working to increase private investment in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), we have created a new \$150 million equity fund to finance increased private investment, and will create funds up to \$500 million for infrastructure investment. We also are undertaking an initiative to strengthen the transportation infrastructure in Africa.

Fourth, we will work to eliminate bilateral debt for the poorest of the reforming nations, and maintain our leadership in the effort to

reduce their debts to the multilateral institutions. This report highlights the progress we have made working with our Economic Summit Partners and with the international financial institutions to ensure that we have a coordinated approach to reducing African debt and its adverse impacts on African economic reform and development.

Fifth, the United States will hold annual economic meetings at the ministerial level with all reforming African nations. In the last 6 months we have held more discussion with African leaders on trade and investment matters than ever before, and we expect this dialogue will intensify in the future.

The Administration will continue working with the Congress, the U.S. private sector, the countries of Africa, and our trading partners, to implement policies that promote reforms and result in increased trade, investment, and development in Africa.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Bill Archer, chairman, and Charles B. Rangel, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means; William Roth, chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Finance; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations.

Statement on Assistance for the Homeless

December 24, 1997

Today—on the eve of Christmas and the first day of Hanukkah—it is important for all Americans to come together as one community and remember those who are less fortunate, particularly our fellow citizens without the warmth and security of a home. I applaud the many Americans who dedicate their lives—and the hundreds and thousands of volunteers who work tirelessly—to help provide shelter, food, and dignity to homeless men, women, and children.

As long as there are children waking up in America on Christmas morning without the comfort of a warm home, we have more

work to do. Religious and community organizations are doing their part to help alleviate homelessness. The Federal Government must do its share too.

That is why I have asked Secretary Cuomo to announce today that my next budget will provide an additional \$327 million for homeless assistance—if enacted, one of the largest dollar increases ever. My new budget will request \$1.15 billion to help move the homeless from the streets to self sufficiency—a 40-percent increase over this year. This amount includes 34,000 vouchers to help individuals and families who are¹ now homeless celebrate future holidays in a place they can call “home.” These funds will help create safer places for our children to grow up, more stable families, and a stronger American community. I look forward to working with Congress to achieve this needed assistance for the homeless.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President’s public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 21

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Aviano, Italy, arriving the following morning.

December 22

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Shortly after his arrival, the President met with the representatives of the National Government Tripartite Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Room A of the National Museum of Sarajevo. The Presidency consists of Alija Izetbegovic, Presidency Chairman (Muslim); Momcilo Krajisnik, Presidency Member (Serb); and Kresimir Zubak, Presidency Member (Croat).

¹ White House correction.

In the afternoon, the President met with President Biljana Plavsic of the Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina at the National Theater.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton went to Tuzla Airfield and had dinner with American troops in the dining hall at “Tent City.” Later, they traveled to Aviano, Italy, and then returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lorenzo H. Aguilar-Melancon, Robert D. Dinerstein, Ann Forts, Ruth Luckasson, Tom E.C. Smith, Deborah Spitalnik, and Cathy Ficker Terrill as members of the President’s Committee on Mental Retardation.

The President announced the appointment of Steven S. Honigman as Special Adviser to the President.

December 23

The President announced his intention to appoint Janice R. Lachance to serve as Chair and member of the National Partnership Council.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City and McAllen, Brownsville, and Houston, TX, on January 8 and 9 to highlight the importance of equal access to education for all Americans.

December 24

The White House announced that the President declared a major disaster in the Northern Mariana Islands and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Typhoon Paka and associated torrential rains, high winds, high surf, and tidal surges on December 16 and continuing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.